

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2 and 5-8 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 2 are amended and claims 5-8 are added. No new matter is added. Support for the new claims can be found in paragraph [0029] of Applicants' specification. Reconsideration and prompt allowance of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants confirm that claims 1 and 2 continue to read on Group I and that added claims 5-8 also read on elected Group I.

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C §102(b) over JP-A-11-054593 to Todoroki. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 calls for a substrate transfer unit that transfers from the substrate holder substrates other than a substrate which was determined to be in an abnormal substrate holding condition according to a result of sensing the holding condition of the substrates using the sensing device.

The Office Action, on page 2, states that Todoroki discloses a control section 80 that senses the holding condition of the substrates by availing the sensing device and controls the transfer unit accordingly. However, Todoroki at paragraph [0033] and [0043] discloses that when the detected number of wafer sheets 1 pre-treatment is compared with the detected number of wafer sheets 1 post-treatment and both number of sheets differ, an output alarm tone, which indicates that there is a breakage of a wafer sheet 1, by the alarm 90 occurs. Further the controller section 80 forbids conveyance actuation of the wafer sheet 1 from the boat 20 to the wafer cassette 10 once the alarm occurs. Therefore, Todoroki fails to disclose that the transfer machine 30 is capable of transferring once it has been sensed that there is an abnormal substrate holding condition.

On the other hand, independent claim 1 recites the feature that the substrate transfer unit is able to transfer substrate other than a substrate, which was determined to be in an abnormal substrate holding condition, according to a result of sensing the holding condition of substrates using the sensing device. Thus, Todoroki fails to disclose all of the above-mentioned features.

Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Rodney H. Rothwell, Jr.
Registration No. 60,728

JAO:RHR/amt

Attachment:

Petition for Extension of Time

Date: September 29, 2008

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 320850
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
--